

Redefining Homeland Security

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On March 16, 2001, the Army War College (USAWC) and the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) hosted the first in a series of Congressional Staff Strategic Issues Luncheons at the Minuteman Building, the ROA headquarters located across from the U.S. Capitol. The focus of this luncheon was "Redefining Homeland Security."

Major General Robert R. Ivany, USAWC Commandant, welcomed more than 65 participants. The first presenter was Dr. Anthony Cordesman, a respected Washington national security analyst from the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Mr. Frank Hoffman, a specialist in defense requirements who headed the study of Homeland Security (HLS) for the U.S. Commission on National Security in the 21st Century (also known as the Hart-Rudman Commission) spoke second.

Both agreed that Homeland Security needs to be redefined and immediate emphasis placed on preparing for the wide variety of threats to the American homeland today and in the future. Dr. Cordesman began by detailing the gap between how the Department of Defense addresses HLS and the way civil agencies view it.

The military services approach Homeland Security in two ways. The first is to protect American territory and U.S. citizens from attack by a hostile state. The primary threats are from ballistic and cruise missiles and in cyberspace. The second approach involves asymmetric warfare, particularly terrorism, as a form of unconventional warfare often associated with so-called "low intensity conflict."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other civilian security agencies approach HLS from a law enforcement perspective. They focus on foreign terrorist organizations that may or may not have state sponsorship and monitor domestic groups and individuals who may pose a terrorist threat. Law enforcement agencies also track drug cartels and transnational criminal organizations, which sometimes operate in "coalition" with each other or with terrorist groups.

Dr. Cordesman emphasized that the nation needs to prepare for conventional kinds of terrorist acts, like the 1995 bombing of the Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City. We must also prepare for attacks on elements vital to the economic infrastructure. The government and the private sector are taking steps to protect the financial system, an obvious target. The transportation infrastructure and utilities like water purification and electrical power also are vulnerable to a range of threats. Dr. Cordesman added that any future attack involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD), whether nuclear, chemical or biological, would likely cause more casualties than all previous incidents combined. To make matters worse, in his opinion, the United States is not prepared to handle the effects of even a small-to-medium level WMD event.

He then outlined the most pressing challenges in Homeland Security. Deployment of responding forces, primarily fire fighters and emergency medical teams, into areas

contaminated by residual radiation or by chemical/biological agents is particularly difficult. Caring for the injured and disposing of the dead will pose enormous problems, since even a small WMD event might cause an overwhelming number of casualties. According to Dr. Cordesman, on any given day even our largest cities would be hard pressed to find 1,000 extra hospital beds.

He urged that a comprehensive strategy be adopted to address Homeland Security. Now most of the \$11 billion budget goes to protect Federal buildings in Washington and overseas installations. He concluded that this raises the larger issue of prioritization within the context of a much-needed HLS strategy.

Mr. Frank Hoffman, the second speaker, had primary responsibility for addressing Homeland Security as a member of the Hart-Rudman Commission. He stated that he agreed with every point made by Dr. Cordesman. Indeed, the Hart-Rudman Commission listed Homeland Security as the nation's top priority because the threats are real and the United States is extremely vulnerable.

Mr. Hoffman defined Homeland Security as being comprised of domestic security programs, homeland defense missions performed by the military services, and diplomatic efforts that deter, prevent, protect and respond to attacks on the United States. He reiterated the need for a comprehensive strategy that provides strategic direction and operational coherence and defines, clarifies and assigns areas of responsibility.

Currently, our prevention and response capabilities are inadequate for the threats we face. He warned: "Americans will likely die on American soil, possibly in large numbers." To keep this dire prediction from becoming a reality, Mr. Hoffman recommended developing a comprehensive strategy addressing prevention, protection, and responses to attacks on the homeland. Prevention will include diplomatic and, when necessary, military action to deny terrorists access to WMD. Overseas, forward-deployed military forces both deter and offer ways to strike at terrorist groups and their sponsors. At home, enhanced surveillance and security will make it more difficult for hostile groups or individuals to enter the United States. Protection includes providing for at least a limited ballistic/cruise missile defense and insulating our critical infrastructure from the disruption that a cyber-attack might cause. Proper authorities must respond quickly to deal with casualties, alleviate suffering, and restore order should deterrence and protection fail. Efficient and effective response depends on clearly defined lines of authority and responsibility among federal, state, and local authorities.

Mr. Hoffman recommended the establishment of a national Homeland Security Agency (HSA) with separate directorates for prevention, protection, and response to accomplish these goals. The Directorate of Prevention would include Customs, the Border Patrol, and Coast Guard. Cyber and physical security would be the responsibility of the Director of Critical Infrastructure Protection. The Directorate of Emergency Preparedness and Response would react to crises resulting from natural disasters and hostile acts, including terrorist attack using WMD. Mr. Hoffman estimated the size of the HSA at around 50,000 people.

The Department of Defense (DoD) will serve various functions in all three areas of prevention, protection, and response. Internationally, military forces will deter by

providing a viable means for preemptive or retaliatory strikes. At home, DoD will take the lead in missile defense and, whenever necessary, will join in the response efforts following any disaster. The National Guard should be assigned homeland security as a primary mission. Mr. Hoffman said that this will be an adjunct to--not a substitute for--its warfighting mission.

Dr. Steven Metz of the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute facilitated a period of interaction and discussion between the panelists and the audience at the conclusion of the formal presentations. During a discussion of how to deter terrorists, participants pointed out that our conventional nuclear deterrent forces have limited utility in deterring acts of terrorism or a ballistic missile attack by a rogue state. The normal rules of deterrence that operated between the major powers during the Cold War simply do not apply when dealing with terrorist groups or rogue states. For instance, it is often difficult to determine what group perpetrated an event, and what--if any--involvement there was by a hostile government. Deciding on a proper retaliatory measure will depend on many variables and will be unique to each situation.

Mr. Hoffman stated it would take 3-4 years to establish a viable Homeland Security Agency. He added that this will have to be accomplished with the limited resources of the current budget of \$11 billion; one barely sufficient for addressing matters of homeland security today and unlikely to increase substantially in the future. So to prioritize effectively, there must be a comprehensive strategy for HLS.

CONCLUSION

The speakers and the discussion with the audience indicated a consensus on the scope of the threat, the vulnerability of the nation, and the need to address the many complex issues and challenges involved in HLS. The program outlined by the Hart-Rudman Commission matches authority, responsibility and accountability. By focusing on state and local resources, it streamlines federal assistance, maximizes the synergies available at state and local levels, and reduces the apprehensions of those who fear that an HSA might threaten civil liberties and individual freedoms. The proposed agency's components would be drawn from existing departments and agencies in such a way that there will be no radical altering of existing organizations at any level. Assuring Homeland Security will not be easy but it can be done. To do nothing invites disaster and risks far greater consequences.

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